

News Release

Senator Pete V. Domenici

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DOMENICI ENCOURAGES DEMOCRATIC LEADER TO DROP OBSTRUCTION TO NATIONAL SECURITY, LAB FUNDING BILL

Chairman Wants Debate, Resolution to Missouri River Flap

WASHINGTON -- In a speech to the Senate today, U.S. Senator Pete Domenici today strongly urged Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle to drop his legislative hold and let the Senate debate the \$22.4 billion appropriations bill that funds the national security work carried out at Los Alamos and Sandia national laboratories.

Domenici, chairman of the Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee, was sharply critical of Daschle's legislative hold that has stopped any debate on the **FY2001 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill**. Daschle is demanding that one provision dealing with Missouri River water flows be unilaterally dropped from the bill, without any debate or prospects for restoring it or similar language.

"We cannot turn on and off all the important work this bill funds, whether its stockpile stewardship or dam safety, just because we have a dispute on the Missouri River that the Minority Leader doesn't even want to debate or vote on," Domenici said. "I beg the Minority Leader to free this relatively small, but important \$22.4 billion bill. I literally beg that he reconsider his hold and that he let us vote. Let us debate and finish the Missouri River issue."

Daschle wants Section 103 eliminated from the Energy and Water bill, without the option of any amendments or similar language being offered to restore it. Section 103 restates language contained in several previous Energy and Water acts to prohibit the use of funds to revise the Missouri River Master Water Control Manual. States on the lower Missouri and Mississippi rivers fear that such revision will allow increased springtime water releases during a season that often brings flood threats associated with heavy rainfall or snow melt.

In the aftermath of several security breeches and the formation of the new National Nuclear Security Administration, Domenici said it is critical that Congress not delay in approving the FY2001 funding necessary to address very serious needs in the nuclear weapons complex, defense environmental clean-up, and ongoing international non-proliferation programs.

Overall, the bill contains \$4.88 billion for DOE atomic energy defense activities,

which includes the Stockpile Stewardship and Stockpile Management programs at Los Alamos and Sandia national laboratories in New Mexico and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California. This is \$244 million more than President Clinton's budget request and a \$456 million increase over the FY2000 level.

"Given the opportunity, we can find a solution to the Missouri River situation. But it is irresponsible to hold up a bill that is critical to our national security interests, improving the safety, reliability and security of our nuclear weapons arsenal. If a one or two-year solution to the issue can be found, we can move this bill toward final completion," Domenici said.

"I am concerned that the Democratic plan is to not let us do anything of significance, literally nothing, unless and until they get everything they want. We continue to hear platitudes about working together to get all the appropriations bills done. But at the same time, they call us do-nothing. The truth is they are obstructionists of the highest order," he said. "If we fail to pass the Energy and Water bill, it will ultimately be in the hands of the Democrats."